

Chapter 12. Cultural Resources

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Setting

Prehistoric Setting

California has a long and complex cultural history with distinct regional patterns that extend back more than 11,000 years. The first generally agreed-on evidence for the presence of prehistoric peoples in California is represented by distinctive fluted spear points called Clovis points. The ancient hunters who used these spear points are presumed to have lived between 10,900 years before present (B.P.) and 11,200 B.P.

Approximately 8,000 years ago, many California cultures shifted the main focus of their subsistence strategies from hunting to seed gathering. Recent studies suggest, however, that this culture pattern is more widespread than originally described and is in fact found throughout the study area. Radiocarbon dates associated with this period vary between 8,000 B.P. and 2,000 B.P. but cluster in the range of 6,000-4,000 B.P. (Basgall and True 1985).

Cultural patterns reflected in the record, particularly specialized subsistence practices, became better defined within the most recent 3,000 years. The record becomes more complex as specialized adaptations to locally available resources were developed and populations expanded. Along the coast and in the Central Valley, evidence of social stratification and craft specialization is indicated by well-made artifacts such as charm stones and beads, which were often found with burials.

Ethnographic Setting

California encompasses lands occupied by more than 60 distinct Native American cultural groups. Although most California tribes shared similar elements of social organization and material culture, linguistic affiliation and territorial boundaries primarily distinguish them from each other. Before the European settlement of California, an estimated 310,000 native Californians spoke dialects of as many as 80 mutually unintelligible languages representing six major North American stocks (Cook 1976, 1978; Shipley 1978). Similar to today, California was demographically very dynamic in prehistoric

times; the area had the highest population density of any area in North America outside the Basin of Mexico and was home to perhaps one tenth of all people living in North America during the pre-Columbian era.

All native Californians followed a basic hunter-gatherer lifestyle, subsisting through a seasonal round of plant collecting, hunting, and fishing. Reliance on particular resources varied with location and season. For example, acorns were a staple throughout northern, central, and parts of southern California but were merely a supplement to the diet along the northwestern coast and the eastern desert, where they could be obtained only by trade.

Evidence indicates a general evolution from subsistence strategies based primarily on hunting large game to a broad-based economy that placed greater emphasis on diversity. Along with this diversification came population growth and a more settled way of life.

At the time of first contact with Spanish explorers and settlers, most groups inhabiting California had extremely well-developed social, ceremonial, and political structures supported by an elaborate and varied material culture.

Native Californian cultures were initially devastated by contact with Europeans, experiencing an unprecedented loss of population. This demographic collapse was brought on by exposure to new diseases to which the people had no immunity and was hastened by the loss of the land base on which various groups depended for their survival.

Historic Setting

The earliest European explorers to enter the California region were the Spanish, who traveled by ship along the Pacific coast during the 17th and 18th centuries. Intent on asserting their dominance over the new land, they established 21 missions, four presidios, and four pueblos between San Diego and Sonoma during 1769-1823 (Bean and Rawls 1983).

Following Mexican independence from Spain in 1822, the Mexican government gained control over California. As the power of the Franciscan missionaries weakened, political control of California fell into the hands of a small group of wealthy rancho families. (Bean and Rawls 1983).

American explorations in California began in the late 18th century with the discovery of the lucrative market for sea otter and beaver pelts. The 1848 discovery of gold by James W. Marshall in the Coloma valley in modern-day El Dorado County, however, created a

gold rush to the region that forever altered the course of California's history. The arrival of thousands of gold seekers in the territory contributed to the exploration and settlement of the entire state. Partly because of its newfound wealth, California attained statehood status in 1850. (Clark 1970).

The establishment of a transcontinental railroad linking the east and west coasts further contributed to California's growth and economic success. With the decline of gold mining in California, agriculture and ranching came to play a more prominent role in the economy of the state. California's natural resources and climate proved well suited for the production of a variety of fruits, nuts, vegetables, and grains. Sheep and cattle ranching also rapidly developed as a major industry in California.

Regulatory Setting

CEQA is the principal regulatory control addressing impacts on cultural resources in California. Projects with the potential to adversely affect significant cultural resources must be reviewed through the CEQA process. As the designated CEQA lead agency for approval of the GO, the SWRCB is responsible for complying with CEQA's requirements regarding the identification and treatment of historic and prehistoric cultural resources. The State CEQA Guidelines (Pub. Res. Code Section 5097) also specify the procedures to be followed in the event of the unexpected discovery of human remains on nonfederal land. The disposition of Native American burials falls within the jurisdiction of the Native American Heritage Commission.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Approach and Methods

To determine potential impacts of the project on cultural resources from land application projects under the GO, cultural resources specialists reviewed the requirements of the GO and identified impact mechanisms for cultural resources (i.e., lands that are actively farmed likely would not be subject to impacts on cultural resources).

Thresholds of Significance

According to CEQA, an impact is considered significant if it would disrupt or adversely affect a prehistoric or historic archaeological site or a property of historic or cultural significance to a community or an ethnic or social group. The State CEQA Guidelines define a significant historical resource as a resource listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) (Pub. Res. Code Section 5024.1). A historical resource may be eligible for inclusion in the CRHR if it:

- g is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage;
- g is associated with the lives of persons important in the state's past;
- g embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
- g has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

If a project proponent agrees to avoid affecting cultural resources identified in the project area, evaluation of these resources for their potential to be listed in the CRHR is not required. If avoidance or protection of a significant cultural resource is not possible, mitigation measures must be implemented, as set forth in Public Resources Code 21083.2(c)-(l). A cultural resource that is not significant need be given no further consideration (Pub. Res. Code Section 21083.2[h]).

Impacts of Agricultural Use

Impact: Damage to or Destruction of Cultural Resources on Lands Not Previously Disturbed by Agricultural Activities

The application and incorporation of biosolids in areas where disturbance has already occurred (i.e., areas that are actively farmed) would not represent a new impact on cultural resources. (For agricultural lands, "disturbed" would be defined as lands where crops have been grown within the past 10 years.) Therefore, significant cultural resources, as defined by CEQA, would not be affected on lands currently under

agricultural production. However, if biosolids are applied and incorporated into soil on lands not previously disturbed by agricultural activities, then cultural resources, either known or unknown, could be affected. This impact is considered significant because activities associated with land application of biosolids could affect significant cultural resources. To reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level, the project proponent shall implement Mitigation Measure 12-1.

Mitigation Measure 12-1: Conduct a Cultural Resources

Investigation. A cultural resources investigation should be conducted before disturbance is permitted on land that has not been disturbed previously. The cultural resources investigation should include a records search for previously identified cultural resources and previously conducted cultural resources investigations of the project parcel and vicinity. This records search should include, at a minimum, contacting the appropriate information center of the California Historical Resources Information System, operated under the auspices of the California Office of Historic Preservation. In coordination with the information center or a qualified archaeologist, a determination can be made regarding whether previously identified cultural resources would be affected by the proposed project and if previously conducted investigations were performed to satisfy the requirements of CEQA. If not, a cultural resources survey may need to be conducted. The purpose of this investigation would be to identify resources before they are affected by a proposed project and avoid the impact. If the impact is unavoidable, mitigation should be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Impact: Damage to or Destruction of Unknown Cultural Resources on Lands Currently in Agricultural Production

On lands currently in agricultural production, grading and tilling activities associated with biosolids use could result in the unearthing of previously unknown cultural resources. If human remains of Native American origin are uncovered, this impact could be significant. To reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level, the project proponent shall implement Mitigation Measure 12-2.

Mitigation Measure 12-2: Comply with State Laws regarding Disposition of Native American Burials, If Such Remains Are

Found. If human remains of Native American origin are discovered during project activities, it is necessary to comply with state laws relating to the disposition of Native American burials, which are under the jurisdiction of the Native American Heritage Commission (Pub. Res. Code Section 5097). If human remains are discovered or recognized in any location other than a dedicated cemetery, excavation or disturbance of

the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent human remains will stop until:

- g** the county coroner has been informed of the discovery and has determined that no investigation of the cause of death is required; and
- g** if the remains are of Native American origin,
 - the descendants of the deceased Native Americans have made a recommendation to the landowner or the person responsible for the excavation work, for means of treating or disposing of the human remains and any associated grave goods with appropriate dignity, as provided in Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, or
- S** the Native American Heritage Commission is unable to identify a descendant or the descendant failed to make a recommendation within 24 hours after being notified by the commission.

According to the California Health and Safety Code, six or more human burials at one location constitute a cemetery (Section 8100) and disturbance of Native American cemeteries is a felony (Section 7052). Section 7050.5 requires that construction or excavation be stopped in the vicinity of discovered human remains until the coroner can determine whether the remains are those of a Native American. If the remains are determined to be Native American, the coroner must contact the California Native American Heritage Commission.

Impacts of Other Activities

Horticultural Use

The use of biosolids for horticultural purposes would result in similar impacts on cultural resources as those described above under “Agricultural Use” if the biosolids are used on areas that have not been previously disturbed (i.e., a new park site or road median) and the biosolids are incorporated into the soil. The incorporation of biosolids into the soil could result in disturbance to cultural resources. However, Mitigation Measure 12-1 included above under “Agricultural Use” would mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level. Additionally, incorporation of the biosolids into the soil also could result in the potential for unknown cultural resources to be unearthed. Mitigation Measure 12-2, described above, would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level. Horticultural

use of biosolids as a planting or potting medium in large nursery operations would not result in cultural resources impacts.

Silvicultural Use

The use of biosolids for silvicultural use could result in similar impacts on cultural resources as those described above under “Agricultural Use” because grading in areas not previously disturbed could adversely affect cultural resources. Impacts on these resources would be dependant on the biosolids application method used and whether the biosolids are incorporated into the soil. If biosolids are incorporated into the soil, Mitigation Measures 12-1 and 12-2 described above would reduce these impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Land Reclamation

The use of biosolids for land reclamation would result in similar impacts on cultural resources as described above under “Agricultural Use” because most applications would occur to previously disturbed land. If applications occur on lands that were not previously disturbed, Mitigation Measures 12-1 and 12-2 would mitigate the impacts to a less-than-significant level. Additionally, the use of biosolids as a final cover material at landfills would not result in impacts on cultural resources because no cultural resources would be located in the landfill material.